



TALK ABOUT ALCOHOL

Underage Drinking

Vermonters might be surprised to learn that alcohol use by youth under the age of 21 is more prevalent than use of most illegal drugs. Youth drinking is associated with many problem behaviors such as other drug use, physical fighting, theft, skipping school, self-harming or suicidal behaviors, and involvement with law enforcement authorities. In Vermont alone, the annual costs associated with youth alcohol use have been estimated at nearly \$65 million dollars.

Did you know...?

- Youth who start drinking after they turn 21 years old are less likely to develop alcohol problems than those who drink before the age of 15.
- Parents and guardians are important role models for children

– studies indicate that parents can positively influence children's behavior by observing the rules of a moderate drinker or by not drinking.

- Adolescents drink less and have fewer alcohol-related problems when their parents discipline them consistently and set clear expectations about the use of alcohol & other drugs.

- Research clearly indicates that in addition to parents and peers, alcohol advertising and marketing have a significant impact on youth decisions to drink. A study of 12-year-olds found that children who were more aware of beer advertising held more favorable views on drinking and expressed an intention to drink more often as adults than did children who were less knowledgeable about the ads.

- \$1.9 billion was spent on alcohol advertising in media in 2002. A study on alcohol advertising in magazines from 1997 to 2001 found that the number of beer and distilled spirits ads tended to increase with a magazine's youth readership. For every 1 million underage readers ages 12-19 of a magazine, there are 1.6 times more beer advertisements and 1.3 times more distilled spirits advertisements.

- Based on the results of the 2005 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered to 8-12th graders in Vermont:

- › **22%** reported having had their first drink before the age of 13.
- › **21%** reported binge drinking in the 30 days prior to the survey. The results range from 7% of 8th graders to 33% of 12th graders.
- › **58%** of students who drank during the past 30 days got

alcohol from someone who gave or purchased it for them.

- › **17%** of those who drank got their alcohol from home.
- › **22%** of students rode with a drinking driver during the past 30 days

- Vermont is ranked among the top 10 states with the highest number of young adults, 18 to 25, reporting binge drinking within the last month.

Positive influences lead to healthy development

Healthy development depends not only on avoiding harmful behavior, but on strengthening positive influences on youth. Examples of these include:

- Parental involvement with schoolwork is one of the strongest predictors of student success in school. The YRBS showed that over 78% of parents talked with their kids about school weekly or more often.
- The 2005 YRBS found that the majority (73%) of Vermont students received above average grades.
- Participation in youth programs and service to the community is associated with reduced likelihood of involvement in risky behaviors. Approximately half (46%) of Vermont students volunteer their time in the community.
- Almost nine out of ten (88%) of students have an adult in their life they can turn to for help and advice.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month.



Together we can talk about alcohol.

For more information please visit the Vermont Department of Health website at:

<http://healthvermont.gov>